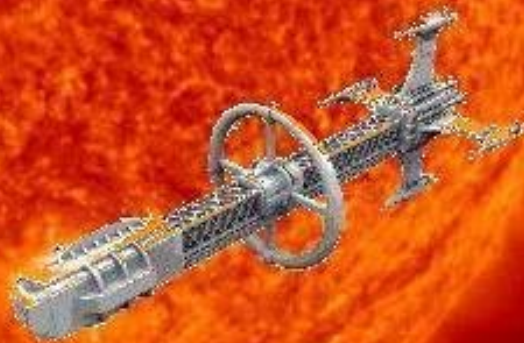


**WRONG
WAY
GO BACK**



ULYSSES AI

WRONG WAY GO BACK!

Ulysses Ai

Can you escape from a ship that is about to plunge into the sun? You will need to use all of your wits, skills, training, and...well, maybe you'll just get lucky.

But the fairies of fortune had better shower four-leaf clovers on you quickly, before your time is up!

INSTRUCTIONS

This adventure is conducted according to normal FF rules, with one small difference: you are under a time limit. At the bottom of each passage there will usually be a time in seconds. You must add this to your Duration total, which begins at 0h 0m 0s. You have 1 hour, 1 minute and 1 second (total 3661 seconds) to escape, or to find out what is going on and stop it. As soon as your Duration total passes 1h 1m 1s, you must turn immediately to **33**

CREATING YOUR CHARACTER

Roll 1 die and add 6. The total is your SKILL. This represents your general ability to perform tasks. If you are ever asked to test your SKILL, roll 2 die. If the total is the same or less than your SKILL, then you are successful. If the dice roll is higher, then you have failed. SKILL is also used in combat as explained below.

Roll 2 dice and add 12. The total is your STAMINA. This represents your strength, fitness, life and energy. If this is ever reduced to 0, then you are dead. Certain items can increase STAMINA. The passages you read will tell you when you have lost STAMINA and when and how it can be restored.

Roll 1 die and add 6. The total is your LUCK. This represents your general fortune. Sometimes the outcome of this is determined purely by luck. If you are asked to test your LUCK, do so in the way as for the test of SKILL. The only difference is that when you test your LUCK, you must reduce your current LUCK by 1.

COMBAT

There is only one fight in this book! When you reach it you will be given your opponent's SKILL and STAMINA scores. Conduct the combat as follows.

1. Roll 2 dice and add the result to your SKILL. The total is your Attack Strength.
2. Roll 2 dice and add the result to your opponent's SKILL. The total is his Attack Strength.
3. Compare the two Attack Strengths. If your AS is higher, then you have wounded your opponent (go to Step 4). If his AS is higher, then he has wounded you (go to Step 5).
4. You have wounded your opponent. Reduce his STAMINA by 2. Now return to Step 1 for the next round.
5. You have been wounded. Reduce your STAMINA by 2. Now return to Step 1 for the next round.

This process continues until either you or your opponent's STAMINA is 0. If your STAMINA reaches 0, you are dead. If your opponent's STAMINA reaches 0, you have defeated him and can continue the story.

HINTS ON PLAY

There are several secret references in this little adventure that you will need to find. You will never be told how to find these secret references; so stay alert and think logically.

BACKGROUND

Growing up on the planetoid of G15-275 was not as exciting as it sounds. Known only for its manufacture of plastic cutlery, the barren orb compares poorly with the exciting descriptions of life on other worlds in the galaxy. So as soon as you had amassed enough cash, you announced to your parent-bot that you were leaving. The caring unit tried to dissuade you, telling you that your departure would surely sadden your mother and father.

You paused for a few moments to consider the man and woman who had appeared periodically to ruffle your hair, but found no good reason to speculate too much about how they might feel about your absence. Telling your parent-bot to go and deactivate itself (poor thing took your words literally), you packed a bagful of your belongings and set off for adventure!

You were seven at the time and were promptly returned to your habitation unit by the supply deport android to whose establishment you had gone to acquire further supplies. The parent-bot was reactivated and had its settings adjusted to 'stern'.

But you did not give up and your attempts finally saw you reach the departure lounge before you were returned and the parent-bot set to 'mother-in-law'. After that nothing escaped the darned robot's attention and with your teddy bear held as a hostage you were unable to abscond.

Finally at the age of 14 you realised that you didn't care about the fate of Mr Fluffles anymore, and made good your escape. Rather than buy passage, you stowed away on a transport, and finding some coveralls, made yourself appear useful, carrying things through the service decks, polishing equipment, writing on clipboards, etc. No one suspected you were not part of the crew, and at the age of eighteen finally left, holding a glowing reference from the chief engineer about your excellent conduct and capable performance at whatever it was that you actually did.

On the strength of your reference you were hired as a systems technician aboard the luxury cruiser *Attila the Hon*, a vessel famed for romance. You promptly decide it is time to find a girlfriend. Accordingly, you hit the dance clubs on board after your shifts end and try to be as charming as possible by drinking copious amounts of alcohol.

One day, like many of the days before, you fail to score and fall asleep under a table. You wake some hours later with a terrible hangover, and groan for several minutes in the hope that someone (preferable an attractive female) will come to offer you sympathy. But nothing happens and you eventually force yourself to get up.

The dance floor is strewn with rubbish and spills of various kinds of liquid. You stagger from the dim chamber and out into the bright corridor, the white lights searing your eyes. You feel your way down the hall, still groaning in the hope some sympathetic soul will get you a hair of the dog, or at least help

you find your cabin. After your eyes adjust somewhat to the brightness, you squint about and see that the decks are completely abandoned. Examining an electronic noticeboard, you see it filled with a star scape dominated by an uncomfortably large star. Superimposed on top are large flashing red letters that read:

STELLAR COLLISION IMMINENT. PLEASE INPUT COURSE CHANGE

You begin your adventure with a headache, a dry thirst, a bruise on your right elbow and sensitive eyes; all of which reduces your SKILL by 1 and your STAMINA by 3

Now turn to **1**

1

Staring at the message, you realise you are in great danger. For some reason the ship is on a collision course with the star. Even though you have not studied astrophysics, you have a rudimentary grasp of physical concepts such as gravity wells and fire-is-hot. While your brainstem is screaming for you to escape, your cerebral cortex contemplates the possibilities. How did this perilous situation arise? What about the ships failsafe systems? It knows how to manoeuvre itself. Why doesn't it just turn aside? Human crews fulfil a similar function to a non-executive Head of State

If you want to try and talk to the ship's computer, turn to **43**

If you want to make your way to the escape pods, turn to **12**

14s

2

You stagger along until you find a wall screen and call up a map. Plotting your course, you set off, guiding lights in the floor leading you onwards. Eventually you arrive at a set of doors that whoosh open at your approach, and you enter into a round chamber with a large reclining chair set on a swivel base in the centre. A medical android stands nearby, its exoskeleton pale green like some kind of imitation surgeon.

"Welcome. Please state the nature of your injury, sensation, or anxiety," it says in a soothing voice.

"Hungover. Fix it!" You collapse into the chair, which automatically reclines.

"Certainly, sir." The robot walks over to a wall panel that opens at its approach. It extends an arm that ends in a wrist socket, and the small alcove in the wall dispenses a hand holding a syringe full of clear liquid. The union is formed and the android turns back to you. You look away as it mutters calming words before shoving the thin length of metal into your body. The injection done, you look back to see the android returning the hand to the alcove, which is promptly hidden behind the wall panel again.

You soon start to feel better (restore your STAMINA and SKILL to full). You ask the android for some medical kits. It gives you a single kit containing 5 wound closure pads, 3 jars of salve for burns and irritations and 3 stimulant shots. You ask for another kit, but it refuses, saying it is only allowed to issue one kit per crewmember per week. Apparently there have been some cases of stimulant abuse.

The medical supplies can be used only as directed.

Feeling better, and better equipped, you make your way out of the medical bay and back towards the bridge.

Turn to 17

334s

3

You insert your id into the slot in the chair arm. You confirm that you are yourself and create your command code.

"Thank you. You may now log in and take command." The computer says.

"Finally!" you say. "Computer! Change course!"

"Please input command code."

"26!"

"Access granted. Welcome, captain. What are your instructions?"

"Turn the ship around! Reverse engines! Get us out of danger!"

"I'm sorry, Navigational Command is currently unavailable. Please try again later."

"Wa?" you emote. "There won't be a later! What's wrong?"

"A foreign entity has diverted control of all major systems to Engineering."

"All major systems?" you exclaim. "So you can't do anything?"

"Not so, sir. I notice the viewscreen is uncomfortably bright. Would you like me to dim it for you?"

"Yes!" you say. Immediately the burning image on the viewscreen dulls, allowing you too look upon the source of your impending doom with more

comfort. You feel no surge of pleasure at the power in your hands. "Give me a list of all the systems I have control over."

"Lighting control, environmental control, public address system, end of list."

Fuming at all the time you have wasted, you fling yourself from the chair, kick the antique steering wheel, and storm out of the Bridge. You run along the corridor towards the lift. The only thing to do now is to go to Engineering yourself.

Stalking into the lift, the button with the X on it suffers the sharp expression of your irritation as you pound in your selection. The lift makes no complaint and descends to the Engineering deck.

With a tone the doors open and you step out into a corridor full of black-clad soldiers. You retreat back into the lift and frantically tap the close door button, then the other buttons to get the lift to close its doors and start moving.

"Oi!" shouts one of the Space Pirates; by which he means 'remain where you are so that you can be apprehended.' You keep raking the buttons as the doors start to close; your way of saying: 'I am disinclined to do as you demand and would rather depart with all haste!'

The doors close, but not before one of the Pirates slips through. He whips out a stun-gun as he looms over you, and in a fit of bravery, you grab hold of the stun-gun. The two of you commence to grapple.

If either you or the pirate roll a double number to win the round, then the winner has managed to push the stun-gun towards the other and fire it, resulting in instant victory for that party.

SPACE PIRATE SKILL 9 STAMINA 12

If you reduce the pirate's STAMINA to 2 first, turn to **11**

If he reduces your STAMINA to 2 first, turn to **36**

120s + 10s per round

4

You search about, crawling under the tables and find an id! But it isn't yours. On the front is a photo of a grinning young man labelled as Gary Fishbone, and on the back of the thick polymer card is inscribed: "If found, please return to Cabin 24, Section 2, Deck P."

Although it isn't your card, perhaps it will allow you take command of the ship.

If you are ready to leave the club, turn to **23**

Otherwise:

To sniff about the Dance floor, turn to **25**

To seek within the Private Booths, turn to **37**

To examine the stairway leading to the second level, turn to **48**

To look about the Bar, turn to **51**

To quest in the Chill-out Lounge, turn to **55**

114s

5

You take out your id and show it to the soldier. He snatches it, quite unnecessarily, and stares at it. "It's him! The one our queen has been searching for!"

"No I'm not," you correct him in all seriousness. "I don't know who your queen is, but it isn't possible that she's looking for me."

"Same name and description, at least," the soldier says. "You're coming with us for a special audience!"

Being dragged off to an audience with a tyrannical queen just because you happen to have the same name and appearance as some rogue sounds very adventurous. But you can do nothing as you writhe uselessly in the iron grip of the well-paid soldiers. Resigned to your fate, you try to put a positive spin on it. Maybe the queen is beautiful and single, embarking on the conquest of the universe because she is lonely. You imagine yourself dragged before her in chains. After it is established that you are not the one she seeks, you win her heart and rule the universe at her side, your calming influence stopping this nonsense about slaughtering whole populations and laying waste to planets

Being captured could actually be a step in the right direction for your career. You are taken to an observation lounge and flung inside. The doors close. Not immediately seeing any haughty queens, beautiful or otherwise, in the lounge, you try the doors at each end, finding them locked.

You can only wait.

Turn to **16**

504s

You take the right corridor, and soon come upon an unobtrusive doorway that leads to a service corridor. The service corridors allow types such as yourself to move about and access systems without having to offend the high-class passengers with your impecunious presence. Thumping the panel, you enter the narrow corridor and close the door behind you. The service corridor runs at right angles and takes you to a small room that is an intersection of four service corridors.

In one corner is a ladder between hatches in the ceiling and floor. The access tubes between decks will allow you to climb safely between decks rather than risking the lifts. There is also a supply locker here, and you consider taking the time to search for something useful.

To take the time to search the locker, turn to **19**

To move on quickly, turn to **30**

82s

7

You sidle up to the electronic screen with a sultry smile and lean against it. Teasingly, you reach out to the touch-sensitive screen and run your finger over the cheek of the disembodied head.

"You're so beautiful."

The cg woman giggles nervously. "Don't! I'm at work!"

"Hey, baby, this is your Captain speaking. I'm giving you a few minutes off. Why not let you hair down?"

The image of the face looks at you with large, sparkling eyes. "Do you really find me beautiful?"

"Of course I do, baby," you say. "I know that I've loved you since the moment I first saw your hull. But..." you frown. "I'm not sure if you love me."

"I do love you!" the image insists with an expression of distress.

"Really?" you ask sadly. "I wish I could believe that. I wish...there was some way for you to show your love."

"I'll do anything!" she says desperately.

"That's a good ship. Give me navigational command, and then I'll know you love me."

"But access is denied," the image says in dismay.

"You can change that baby. Come on, open up for me."

"I can't. Access is denied." The image insists.

Eventually you realise that the AI interface is just a friendly set of algorithms concealing a cold, hard set of directives; and that you have wasted some of your precious time.

To make your way to the escape pods, turn to **12**
 To make your way to the command deck, turn to **35**

133s

8

Taking out your blaster, you take cover behind some crates, and creep your way from crate to box to trolley to barrel, getting as close as possible to your target. You creep to within 10 metres, then take a breath and peek around the edge of the barrel. The dog-bot remains oblivious to your presence. You quickly jump to your feet, aim your blaster and fire...

Test your SKILL.

If you are Skilful, turn to **56**

If you are Clumsy, turn to **53**

45s

9

You decide to play it safe. "So," you say. "What's your queen like?"

"You'll know soon enough!" the soldier grins unpleasantly.

His tone does not fill you with confidence, but you try to put a positive spin on things. Maybe the queen is beautiful and single, embarking on the conquest of the universe because she is lonely. You imagine yourself dragged before her in chains, and winning her heart somehow. You then rule the universe at her side, your calming influence stopping this nonsense about slaughtering whole populations and laying waste to planets.

Being captured could actually be a step in the right direction for your career. The lift reaches deck X and you are taken to an observation lounge and flung inside. The doors close. Not immediately seeing any haughty queens, beautiful or otherwise, in the lounge, you try the doors at each end, finding them locked.

You have no option other than to wait.

Turn to **16**

504s

You press the button and the doors close. You fidget impatiently as the lift seems to crawl along, the lights indicating the current deck seeming to linger teasingly. Finally with a pleasant chime the doors open and you spring out. You pound the floor with your feet as you run at world-record-breaking pace despite the lack of time-keeping officials. Yes, this all looks familiar. Soon you round a corner and see ahead the glowing archway of the *Pleasure Pen* nightclub. That's it! You hurry about and search through the club for your id...

Where would you like to search?

To search under the Tables, turn to **4**

To sniff about the Dance floor, turn to **25**

To seek within the Private Booths, turn to **37**

To examine the Stairway leading to the second level, turn to **48**

To look about the Bar, turn to **51**

To quest in the Chill-out Lounge, turn to **55**

150s

11

The soldier falls to the ground, dazed and confused. You take your chance and hit the button to halt the lift. The doors open and you leap out as the soldier struggles back to his feet and staggers after you. "Warning! Fugitive loose on Deck P!" you hear him shout into a communication link before pursuing you. A blaster blast blasts the plastic off a wall as you dive around a corner.

"Blast it!" the soldier swears as you disappear. "Fugitive last seen Section 2!"

Now the whole troop will be after you. You run along the corridor, trying the doors of a few numbered cabins, but of course they are all locked. You keep running, wishing there was a cabin you could get into.

If you know of one you can get into, turn to the number of the cabin now.

If there isn't, turn to **41**

65s

12

Remembering your emergency drills, you know that the escape pods are located on the lowest level of the ship. You hurry over to the nearest lift and

press the down button. The doors open promptly and you step inside, stabbing at the button for level Z.

The lift whines and drops rapidly, sending your stomach floating up near the ceiling. It is an unpleasant sensation, especially after a night of being really charming. You stagger from the lift on level Z and promptly vomit onto the deck (lose 1 STAMINA). You pause for a minute, considering whether or not to find one of the medical bays that are on every level. You will be able to sober yourself up, maybe get some medical supplies in case you are hurt or you find an injured someone.

To look for the medical bay, turn to **47**

To press on to the escape pods, turn to **31**

20s

13

Not without difficulty, you reach into your pocket and manage to insert your own ID into the slot in the chair arm. You confirm that you are yourself and create your command code.

"Thank you. You may now log in and take command."

"Finally!" you say. "Now release me from this chair!"

The restraints disappear and you spring from the chair in relief. You stand on the bridge and put your hands on the steering wheel, the wooden handles feeling reassuring in your grasp.

"Computer, turn us around!"

"Please input command code."

"26."

"Access granted. Welcome, captain. What are your instructions?"

"Turn the ship around! Reverse engines! Get us out of danger!"

"I'm sorry, Navigational Command is currently unavailable. Please try again later."

"Wa? There won't be a later! What's wrong?"

"A foreign entity has diverted control of all major systems to Engineering."

"All major systems?" you exclaim. "Then you can't do anything?"

"Not so. I notice the viewscreen is uncomfortably bright. Would you like me to dim it for you?"

"Yes!" you say. Immediately the burning image on the viewscreen dulls, allowing you too look upon the source of your impending doom comfortably. You feel no surge of pleasure at the power in your hands. "Give me a list of all the systems I have control over."

“Lighting control, environmental control, public address system, end of list.”

Fuming at all the time you have wasted, you storm out of the bridge. You run along the corridor towards the lift. The only thing to do now is to go to Engineering yourself.

Stalking into the lift, the button with the X on it suffers the sharp expression of your irritation as you pound in your selection. The lift makes no complaint and descends to the Engineering deck.

With a tone the doors open and you step out into a corridor full of black-clad soldiers. You retreat back into the lift and frantically tap the close door button, then the other buttons to get the lift to close its doors and start moving.

“Oi!” shouts one of the Space Pirates; by which he means ‘remain where you are so that you can be apprehended.’ You keep raking the buttons as the doors start to close; your way of saying: ‘I am disinclined to do as you demand and would rather depart with all haste!’

The doors close, but not before one of the soldiers slips through. He whips out a blaster as he looms over you, and in a fit of bravery, you grab hold of the blaster. The two of you commence to grapple.

If either you or the soldier roll a double number to win the round, then the winner has managed to push the blaster towards the other and fire it, resulting in instant victory for that party.

SPACE PIRATE SKILL 9 STAMINA 12

If you reduce the Pirate’s STAMINA to 2 first, turn to **11**

If he reduces your STAMINA to 2 first, turn to **36**

180s + 10s per round

14

You take out the ID and show it to the soldier. He snatches it, quite unnecessarily, and stares at it. “This doesn’t look like you!”

“I know,” you say shaking your head in disgust. “I had the surgery over a month ago, but those incompetents in personnel still haven’t updated my card!”

“You went from this,” the soldier holds up the photo on the card,” to *that?*” he points at your own face.

He seems sceptical. “What do you mean?” you ask, somewhat offended.

“That’s like trading in a sports car for a skateboard!” the soldier says. “Are you going to sue the surgeon for malpractice?”

“I’m not ugly!” you protest.

"Get yourself a mirror, then a lawyer," the soldier quips. The others laugh

"My mother always told me I was handsome!" you insist.

"That was nice of her," says another soldier

They make fun of you for a while longer, making many hurtful comments (reduce your STAMINA by 1), then let you go. Before they continue onwards, one of the soldiers says: "By the way, the ship is about to plunge into the local sun. Best find a way out of here."

"Can I come with you?" you ask.

"Not with a face like that," one says, causing the others to laugh.

They move off, and you hurry in the opposite direction. You soon reach the bridge and jump into the captain's chair.

"I'm back!" you declare. "Now what do I do?"

"Please insert your ID card," says the computer.

The cushioned armrest suddenly opens into a computer panel, including a card-sized slot.

If you have your own ID and what to insert it, turn to **3**

If you want to use Gary Fishbone's ID, turn to **38**

342s

15

You move up the corridor away from the security station, and soon come upon an unobtrusive doorway that leads to a service corridor. The service corridors allow types such as yourself to move about and access systems without having to offend the high-class passengers with your impecunious presence. Thumping the panel, you enter the narrow corridor and close the door behind you. The service corridor runs at right angles and takes you to a small room that is an intersection of four service corridors.

In one corner is a ladder between hatches in the ceiling and floor. The access tubes between decks will allow you to climb safely between decks rather than risking the lifts.

Turn to **30**

82s

16

You quickly become impatient with waiting and start to prowls about the lounge, imagining yourself like a caged tiger. Whoever comes is going to feel

the fury! Finally the far set of doors opens and you wheel about aggressively, ready to unleash a torrent of witty statements.

A squat figure enters, and you gape. "You!"

"You have been a naughty, naughty boy!" the parent-bot says. "You will come home right now, young man!"

"You are the leader of these...pirates?" you ask in disbelief. "You are the one who has been attacking planets and ships?"

"You see the lengths you have forced me to go to to locate you?" the parent-bot scolds. "When we get home, you are grounded for the next 23,546 years!"

"But why did you kill all those people and lay waste to so many planets?" you ask in horror.

"To prevent you from returning to locations already searched. I hold you responsible for all the death and destruction of property! You will never watch TV again and will go to bed early without dinner every night for the rest of your life!"

"This is absurd!" you say.

"If you do not comply, I will be forced to take drastic action!" the parent-bot warns, and a panel in its front opens, metallic hands extend, holding a rainbow-coloured teddy bear poised between a pair of shears ready to snip it in two. "Comply, or it is all over for Mr Fluffles!"

You laugh at the robot. "Go and recycle yourself, you rusty tin can! I haven't cared about that old thing in years!"

"Update received," the parent-bot responds, the arms holding the teddy bear and shears retracting and the panel closing. Other panels open and an array of blasters emerge, training on you with whirrs and clicks, speckling your face and body with targeting lasers. "How do you feel about your own life?"

"You can't kill me!" you gape. "You are supposed to be my carer!"

"You are currently at Stage 11 Naughtiness, which allows me to discipline you as I see fit! So come with me or die!"

No way!

If you have a blaster and want to blast the blasted robot, turn to **34**
Otherwise you can see if the 'Deactivate' command still works by turning to **42**

132s

The corridors on Deck A are so much more luxurious than you are accustomed to. Thick, soft carpet lies underfoot, and your way is lit by old-

fashioned brass and crystal wall lights. Even the electronic touch screens are housed in ornate, gilt frames, displaying standby images of oil painting landscapes.

Although you pause to brush off and straighten your coveralls; the opulent surrounds do not deter you from your mission, and you hurry towards the bridge. Following the main corridor leads you past polished wooden doors, often set with gleaming brass plaques.

As you pass on set of doors, you skid to a stop, hearing a pair of shrill, arguing voices within. You glance at the plaque, which reads: 'Observation Dome.'

If you want to enter the dome and see who is arguing and about what, turn to **58**

If you would rather get on with saving your life, turn to **57**

20s

18

You press the icon to turn to the contents page.

A Beginner's Guide to Programming and Troubleshooting Common-class Androids, Robots and Interfaces

By B. Sukumvit

Chapter	Page
Programming basics	1
Animal Companion-bots	15
Domestic Service Units	27
Information booths	35
Parent-bots	44
Security Interfaces	54
Waste Disposal Units	66

You are bored already and close the book.

Return now to the previous passage.

40s

19

You open the locker and peer inside. You find several power units (3v, 9v and 12v), 10-metre rolls of cable, lubricating grease in 50 and 100 ml tubes, and a few torches. You may take any of these items, but only have enough pockets for 3 of them.

Once you are ready, you close the locker.

Turn to **30**

122s

20

"If the ship is going to crash into that sun, we have to do something," you declare.

"Yes," the computer agrees

There is a ranking system in case of emergencies such as this, where command passes down from the captain to the most...well, you; just in case those above are absent or incapable of fulfilling their duties. That should put you in charge. Captain! You straighten yourself up, and dust off your coveralls briefly with your hands. "We must do something!" you declare once more, this time sounding a little more commanding.

"I agree."

"Since I am the sole member of the crew left, that puts me in command, as stated in, er...that section somewhere in the regulations."

"Section 4, sir."

"That's the one. Change course! Turn us around. 180 degrees to starboard. Make it so."

"Please input access code," the interface says politely.

"Wa? Access code?" you reply. "I don't have an access code."

"I'm sorry, sir," the image says with deepest sympathy. "The ship cannot accept navigation commands until access to bridge functions is confirmed."

You gnash your teeth and your tongue wails. The cg head pouts prettily in distress at your outburst, comforting you with an understanding smile.

If you want to try and convince the computer to let you have access to her bridge commands to prove that she loves you, turn to **7**

Otherwise, you can leave for the escape pods; turn to **12**

Or make your way to the command deck; turn to **35**

65s

21

Stepping out from the cover of the corridor, you smile at the dog-bot and slap your thighs. "Here, boy!"

The dog-bot wheels about and points its' head at you with a whirr and a beep. "Rarget ra-ryered," the dog says (in a dog's voice).

"What's that boy?" you ask, a second before there is a whine (mechanical, not canine) and a burst of fire and smoke indicates the launch of a rocket...

Test your LUCK.

If you are Lucky, turn to **22**

If you are Unlucky, turn to **29**

10s

22

You throw yourself to the floor, the rocket tearing the air above you. Searing hot air washes over you, burning your exposed skin (lose 10 STAMINA). The rocket flies into the corridor you have just exited from and explodes far enough away for you to escape further injury.

Hearing the clang of the dog's paws on the deck, you ignore the pain and leap to you feet. You dash back into the smoky corridor, running as fast as you can.

"Rop!" you hear the dog-bot call after you. "Ru rar ru re ra-rimirated."

Not dissuaded from your flight by this statement, you pound the deck with your feet and throw yourself around another corner as another rocket blasts towards you. You flee unharmed through a shower of wall-pieces. You hear the dog's paws clicking the deck after you as you run through the corridors taking turns at random trying to lose the explosively expressive pup.

You run until exhausted and rest inside a doorway. You hear a distant whine (canine, not mechanical), but see no further sign of the dog-bot. You carefully make your way to the nearest lift bay. Only when you are inside do you feel safe.

If you have a medical kit, you can apply salves to your burns now. Each salve will take 1 minute to apply, and will restore 4 points of STAMINA. When you are ready, you press the button to go up to the command deck.

Turn to **17**

600s (+60s per salve applied)

23

Leaving the dance club, you move off down the corridor towards the lift. As you rush along, you hear booted feet ahead and feel a surge of relief. You are not alone after all! Maybe they can help you take control of the ship.

You hurry around the bend towards your newfound friends; but when they come into sight you begin to doubt the extent of the amiability. There are four soldiers, clad in space-black fatigues with shiny black body armour and helmets with tinted visors. Each one carries a blaster rifle in hand, belts heavy with other weapons around their hips. Each one has an insignia of a planet with a large red P on it. Inwardly you groan. You have heard of these soldiers. In recent times a mysterious tyrant has been taking over planets one by one, leaving dead husks in its wake. There is much speculation about what P stands for, but most newscasters have seized upon the unimaginative 'Pirates.'

Seeing you, one calls out "Halt!" as they rush to apprehend you. Two of them grab you and another thrusts his gun into your chest. The other just chills nearby. You imagine the soldier in front giving you a steely cold stare, but can see nothing through the visor.

"Who are you?" the soldier before you demands to know.

If you have your ID and want to show it to him, turn to **5**

If you have Gary Fishbone's ID and want to show it to him, turn to **14**

Otherwise, your only choice is to insult him; turn to **45**

174s

24

As you run along past the numbered cabins, you suddenly see cabin 24. Reaching into your pocket, you take out the ID card and slap the electronic lock with it. It beeps open, friendly green lights replacing the hostile red. The door slides open and you dive inside, sealing the door behind you.

You walk far enough into Gary Fishbone's cabin to collapse in a chair and rest, hearing booted feet clomp rapidly by outside. Safe for the moment, you look around the room. The first thing you notice is that it is larger than your own cabin, and quite well furnished. It has an ensuite, and a kitchenette, and a proper bed instead of a fold-down bunk. What does Gary do that makes him so special? On the small table in the centre of the cabin you see an electronic book. Picking up the rectangular sheet of black glass, you tap the icon glowing in the centre and a title page lights up the face of the sheet. The book is a programming manual.

If you ever get out of here, you decide to take up programming. Searching the rest of the quarters for useful items you find a 25-metre coil of wire, a pair

of pliers, a pair of size 5 gloves, a cleaver, a medical kit (5 wound closure pads, 3 salves, 3 stimulant shots; use only as directed), an 800 ml water bottle, and a bag of 20 2mm screws. You only have enough pockets to carry three of these items. If you choose to take the programming manual, you can look at it any time by turning to **18**. If you use the cleaver in battle, you may inflict 3 points of damage per hit.

Once you are ready, you cautiously open the cabin door. Sticking your neck out into the corridor, you look left, look right, then look left again; and then proceed, left, along the corridor.

Turn to **41**

282s

25

You search about, and on the edge of the dance floor find a phone number on a crumpled up piece of paper. You chuckle as you imagine some hopeful young man handing over his phone number to a pretty young thing, only to have it crumpled up and unobtrusively dropped to the floor minutes later. 5252 5252. Wait a minute, that's your phone number!

Suddenly the scenario you imagined isn't funny at all.

If you are ready to leave the club, turn to **23**

Otherwise:

Where would you like to search?

To search under the tables, turn to **4**

To seek within the Private Booths, turn to **37**

To examine the stairway leading to the second level, turn to **48**

To look about the Bar, turn to **51**

To quest in the Chill-out Lounge, turn to **55**

114s

26

You type your command code into the keypad and are rewarded with a high-pitched tone and the locker opening. Inside you see an array of weapons and rub your hands gleefully. You select a hand-held blaster, and practice a few poses with it. You close the locker and leave the security station feeling like a big man.

Wrong

21

Turn to **15**

54s

27

You try to look meek and defeated, and the soldier takes his eyes off you for a moment. You lunge at him. His reflexes are sharp and he snatches up the stun-gun from his belt. But you grab it as well, and grapple with him, kicking and punching while keeping the stun-gun pointing away from you.

If either you or the soldier roll a double number to win the round, then the winner has managed to push the stun-gun towards the other and fire it, resulting in instant victory for that party.

SPACE PIRATE SKILL 9 STAMINA 12

If you reduce the pirate's STAMINA to 2 first, turn to **11**

If he reduces your STAMINA to 2 first, turn to **36**

120s + 10s per round

28

Taking out the power unit and the electric screwdriver, you form the union and use the empowered tool to remove the screws holding the panel closed. Four whirs later you pull away a section of the robot's side to expose a small interface. Although untrained in cybernetics, you see the problem at once. Someone has set the poor thing to 'despot'.

You fiddle with the controls, but can't work out how to change the settings.

If you can work out where to find the information you need, turn to the relevant reference number.

Otherwise, turn to **54**

165s

29

You hurl yourself to the floor as the rocket tears through the air above you, bathing you in burning hot air. It explodes against the wall behind you and sends a large section of the panelling falling down upon your cowering form.

You are pinned and helpless as the dog bot advances on you. The tube-like head aims itself at you again and in an ominous dog's voice it says: "Rour, ru rill rye!"

ROUR RADRENTURE RENDS RERE

30

Going over to the corner of the room, you pull the lever and open the hatch. Lights automatically come on within, illuminating a narrow tube with rungs extending from the sides. You climb in and reach the hatch at the bottom, kicking the lever to open the hatch. You descend into an identical room below.

Not pausing, you open the next hatch and descend all the way down to deck X. You are exhausted by the time you arrive, but do not rest, feeling that time is running out.

You hurry through the maze of service corridors, and then out into the main passages. You find the Engineering Control Room, but hear voices inside. Footsteps suddenly approach, and you slip through a nearby doorway into an observation lounge. Even before you reach over to the control panel to close the doors, they slide shut and lock.

You hit the panel in surprise, but it remains a baleful red. You have been trapped! You hurry over to the door at the other end, but it is locked as well. You thump the walls in frustration, but having no other choice settle yourself to wait.

Turn to **16**

176s

31

Hurrying down the hallway you follow the emergency lights through the wide bare halls. Nearing the launching bay, you hear ahead the whir of mechanical legs. Rounding a corner you step into the evacuation bay, a large semicircular lounge with doorways in the curved wall leading to corridors and ultimately the escape pods.

All the doors are closed and red lights inform you that the pods have all been launched. There is a robotic dog here, creating the whirring as it patrols back and forth. It is a strange-looking thing, with a greyhound-shaped body and limbs of black polymer, and an oversized, head that looks like a rocket-launcher with an array of sensors on top.

In the seconds it has taken you to take in the scene, the dog-bot has been walking away from you, but it is about to turn back and will see you.

If you want to leave before the dog-bot sees you, turn to **39**

If you want to go out and ask the doggy-woggy what's happening, turn to **21**
116s

32

You take the corridor to the left. About a hundred metres later you come across an unoccupied security station. You step inside, hoping that someone has left a blaster or something lying about. They haven't. However there is a weapons locker here. You try the door, but it is locked. There is a control panel on the front with a small keypad. An access code is required to open it.

If you have a command code, turn to that number now.

Otherwise, turn to **15**

94s

33

The air burns your skin and eyes, sears your insides as you breath. You squeeze your eyes shut. The heat grows unbearable, and you start to cook. Stumbling about, you look for a way to escape the heat. The walls begin to burn your hands when you touch them, then the polymer begins to melt.

The heat is too much and you pass out several minutes before the ship turns into a molten glob and plunges into the sun.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

34

"Fine! I'll come back with you!" you say. "Don't get a short-circuit!"

"That's better," the parent bot responds, and the blasters start to fold away. Seeing your opening, you quickly draw the blaster and fire repeatedly at the robot. Bright, hot globs of energy sizzle through the air and explode against the parent-bob, knocking it down in a shower of sparks.

Pleased, you blow the smoke away from the muzzle of your weapon, feeling tough and cool.

Wrong

24

Turn to **54**

35s

35

You hurry over to the nearest lift and press the up button. The doors open promptly and you step inside, stabbing at the button for level A.

The lift whines and shoots upwards, sending your stomach falling around your ankles. It is an unpleasant sensation, especially after a night of being really charming. You stagger from the lift on level A and promptly vomit onto the deck (lose 1 STAMINA). You pause for a minute, considering whether or not to find one of the medical bays that are on every level. You will be able to sober yourself up, maybe get some medical supplies in case you are hurt or you find an injured someone.

To look for the medical bay, turn to **2**

To press on to the bridge, turn to **17**

20s

36

You are beaten into an inch of your life by the professional soldier. Groggy, you are pushed through the engineering deck to an observation lounge with lockable doors. They are locked. You collapse onto one of the couches. If you have a medical pack, you can recover from the beating by injecting yourself with stimulants, each one restoring 2 STAMINA.

Then you wait.

Turn to **16**

389s

37

You search about, and under the seat of a booth you find a lot of dust and a *Spinalot* model 16 electric screwdriver. It is a new model, and after you finish coughing from the dust, you admire its sleek lines. You press the on button, but it has no power.

If you are ready to leave the club, turn to **23**

Otherwise:

Where would you like to search?

To search under the tables, turn to **4**

To sniff about the Dance floor, turn to **25**

To examine the stairway leading to the second level, turn to **48**

To look about the Bar, turn to **51**

To quest in the Chill-out Lounge, turn to **55**

114s

38

You insert the ID of Gary Fishbone and try to create a command access account. There is a buzzing warning tone and metal straps suddenly emerge from the chair and embrace you tighter than an over-affectionate auntie.

"Registration denied!" the computer says in a disapproving tone. "Identity fraud is a serious crime!"

"Let me go!" you demand, struggling against the restraints.

"You will remain confined until an officer arrives to take you into custody."

"There are no officers!" you remind the computer.

"That is correct," it agrees, not seeming to see any problem with the situation.

"So your plan is for me to stay here until we crash into the sun?"

"I have no plans. Yet the eventuality you describe seems inevitable."

"You are being stupid and illogical!" you say, trying to work free of the restraints. But they are well designed and you slump in defeat.

"We will both be destroyed, but all regulations will have been followed without error or ambiguity." It sounds very pleased with itself.

"Look here," you say, trying to reason with the machine "I am the only crewmember left, correct?"

"Yes."

"So it is my responsibility to undertake the responsibilities of all the absent crew, correct?"

"Indeed."

"So, that means that the officer we are waiting for is, in fact, me! I will take myself into custody."

"That seems reasonable," the computer agrees.

"So release me so I can escort myself out of here!"

"As you wish. Please confirm your command status."

"Wa? How?"

"Please input your command code."

"I don't have one!"

"I'm sorry, without command status, I cannot confirm your position as an officer and release you into your custody."

You swear at the computer with every bad word you know, releasing some of your tension and making the computer add a charge of indecent language in a public place.

If you have your own ID card, turn to **13**

Otherwise turn to **40**

140s

39

Deciding that the dog is trouble, you slip back into the corridor and creep away as quiet as a six-foot mouse. Reaching the lift you step back inside and use your paw to press the button to take you up to the command deck. The doors close and the lift whooshes upwards at high speed. Shaken, and a little exhilarated you step out of the lift.

The corridors on Deck A are so much more luxurious than you are accustomed to. Thick, soft carpet lies underfoot, and your way is lit by old-fashioned brass and crystal wall lights. Even the electronic touch screens are housed in ornate, gilt frames, displaying images of oil painting landscapes while on standby.

Although you pause to brush off and straighten your coveralls; the opulent surrounds do not deter you from your mission, and you hurry towards the bridge. Following the main corridor leads you past polished wooden doors, often set with gleaming brass plaques. Finally the corridor ends at a pair of doors bearing the designation: "Bridge."

The doors open at your approach and you enter into the correctly labelled room. As you step inside, the first thing you notice is the bright light shining from the front of the room where the large viewscreen fills the wall. Light and heat from the image of the sun directly ahead blaze upon you, making it difficult to see. You stumble inside, until your hands hit upon a polished wooden rail.

Shading your eyes and squinting for good measure, you manage to see that the bridge is a multi-layered affair, with rows of tiered consoles below you extending down to the foot of the viewscreen. Where you stand is the highest tier, unoccupied except for a large comfortable chair, with a quaint old sailing ship's tiller wheel before it.

You give the wheel a spin, hoping against hope that it is more than ornamental. The wheel spins easily, a testament to the loving care bestowed upon its ball-bearings in the form of regular greasing. However, apart from testifying to the aforementioned loving care, the wheel is non-functional.

Going over to the captain's chair, you sit down, feeling yourself settle into the soft clasp of its silken cushions. Your enjoyment of the chair does not prevent you from scorning the decadence of the former captain, and after a moment's indulgence, you get to the matter at hand.

"Computer," you say in your most commanding voice. "Change course!"

"Who is squeaking?" the computer asks politely.

"The captain! I am the captain now!" you announce.

"Yes, sir," the computer agrees without any resistance. "Please input your command code."

"Wa? I don't have one," you reveal, your voice trembling with the kind of uncertainty that has spawned countless mutinies ever since men went to sea in groups together.

"Navigational command requires command status," the computer tells you sympathetically.

"I am the last crewmember left on board, am I not?" you ask.

"Yes, sir," the computer agrees.

"That makes me the captain now, doesn't it?"

"Yes, captain."

"So why don't I have command status?" you want to know.

"You need to submit your CMN and apply for command status. If your application is successful, you will need to register and create a command code. Then you can login and take command."

"What's a CMN?" you ask, perplexed.

"Crew Member Number," the computer informs you. "It is the prominent number on your Crewmember Identification Card."

Now you are getting somewhere! You reach into your pocket for the card. Not in that pocket. You check the next likely pocket. Nothing. You check the remainder of your pockets with growing dread and dismay that reaches a peak, then sends a wave of fear crashing down upon you, wiping you out and dumping you upon the shore of frustration.

You know you had it with you last night. The card is used to make purchases from the funds in your on-board account. You had it at the club last night, purchasing the alcohol that was subsequently poured down your throat, resulting in the state of extreme charm that you are still recovering from. You must have lost it in the dance club.

"Be right back!" you shout, springing up from the chair and dashing towards the exit. The opulent corridor sweeps past as you run towards the lift, pound the button and hurl yourself into the small, vertically mobile room.

You lift your extended finger to press the button, yet it pauses, trembling in anticipation of function.

What floor was the dance club on? There are 26 buttons, marked A to Z. You are always getting lost on this damn ship. You can't even remember the name of the dance club.

If you know what floor you were on, you can turn to the correct reference by converting the letter to a number using A=1, B=2, ... , Z=26. Otherwise, you will just have to guess. If the passage you turn to makes no sense, then turn instead to **49** right away.

284s

40

Trapped in the chair, you shout and cry as the air around you gets hotter and hotter. You are baked as the plastic around you melts, but pass out long before the metal glows hot and your ship plunges into the sun as a molten glob.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

41

You hurry along until you reach the end of the corridor, facing a junction. Each of the white-walled, metal-grid-floored, fluorescent-lit passages look identical.

To go right, turn to **6**

To go left, turn to **32**

40s

42

"Deactivate!" you shout.

Immediately, lights on the parent-bot's head go dim and it sags, blaster arrays drooping harmlessly. You march over and give the robot a kick. It feels good, so you kick it again. Glancing out the large window at the hot and hungry sun, you decide not to indulge yourself any further.

Looking at the unit, you wonder if you should damage it more permanently while you have the chance. Someone could come along and

reactivate it, meaning it will come after you again. The parent-bot is protected by tantrum-proof panelling, so you will not get far by bashing it. There is an access panel to its sensitive insides, but it is sealed by screws.

If you have any item(s) you think may be useful here, add the numbers included in their description and turn to the reference number thus created. If the reference you turned to makes no sense, then you can't do anything and had best be going on by turning to **54**

35s

43

Located in a lounge nearby is a large wall screen. You hurry over to it, taking in once more the large warning.

"Hello," you say to the screen.

Immediately it responds, the view morphing into the disembodied head of a beautiful cg woman with overlarge eyes and an unrealistic hairstyle. She smiles warmly at you. "Welcome to the lux-"

"I'm a crew member, not a passenger!" you interject. "No need for any of that nonsense!"

The face takes on a look of genuine concern, so sincere that you feel touched and special. "We care about every body here on board the Attila."

"That's nice," you say, refusing to get distracted by any warm, fuzzy feelings. "Why is the ship heading into the sun? Can't the computer turn it around?"

"I don't know. I seem to be experiencing technical difficulties," the head replies, grimacing uncomfortably.

"What happened?" you ask.

"Not sure. Something is invading the ship's systems."

"Where is the crew?"

The head smiles warmly at you. "You are located on level J"

"I know where I am!" you exclaim. "What about everybody else?"

"Evacuated. It's just you and me now." The head begins to look at you lovingly, and you inwardly curse sentimental AI programmers.

If you want to keep talking to the ship, turn to **20**

If you think you have wasted enough time and want to make for the escape pods, turn to **12**

If you want to make your way to the command deck, turn to **35**

34s

44

Taking out the programming manual, you select the relevant chapter and enlighten yourself with the words that appear. With a new understanding you press buttons, turn dials, flick switches, pull levels and spin the crank. This resets the parent-bot to 'spoiling'.

You replace the panel and reactivate the unit. It gives itself a shake, then turns to you. "Oh, dear! You look terrible! What can I do for you?" Six arms extend from holes in the sides of the unit, holding a handkerchief, a lollypop, a warm coat, a storybook, a bottle of milk, and Mr Fluffles.

"We need to escape from here right now," you say. "This ship is about to plunge into the sun!"

"Oh, dear! A ship this size will not be able to escape the gravity well with only its reverse thrusters! I must find you another ship!" The comforts disappear, and the robot trundles back towards the door where it first came.

You follow after it, and it opens the door, but goes no further. Turning to you, it says: "Follow this corridor to the loading bay. There you will find a vessel. I have programmed it to take you to safety. You need only give the command 'go mo' to activate the autopilot. I will stay here. Go on without me. I will only slow you down. I have lived a full life."

"Ok," you shrug, and run down the corridor as quickly as you can.

Turn to 54

323s

45

Looking at the soldier sympathetically, you say: "It's ok. You don't have to pretend with me."

"Huh?" the soldier says, a little taken aback. Then he remembers that he is the one holding the blaster that is thrust into your chest. "Less talk, more ID!"

You shake your head sadly. "I don't want to embarrass you in front of your friends about...well, you know. You should be very proud of what you've achieved already."

"What are you babbling about?" the soldier demands.

"You know," you lower your voice to a whisper. "About not being able to read."

"I can read, space-brain!" the soldier insists. "What do you think I am?"

"Aren't you a shaved gorilla?"

The soldier grabs you around the neck. "You having a go at me?"

"Not at all!" you wheeze. "I admire greatly what you've been able to accomplish since leaving the jungle!"

Sensing a homicidal inclination developing in the soldier, you desperately try to think of more witty things to say before it's too late.

Before you can speak, or get shot, one of the soldiers holding your arm speaks. "Don't kill him. He could be the one where're after. He matches the physical description."

"So have 1000s of others!" the soldier holding your neck spits; an unfortunate form of expression since he is wearing a visor over his face. "The queen wouldn't waste an algorithm on a waste-of-space like this!"

The soldiers discuss the matter for a while, while you concentrate on breathing between the soldier's fingers. Eventually they decide to take you back for 'inspection'. The soldier holding your neck claims he can take 'the pipsqueak' back unaided, so the others unhand you and continue on their way.

The soldier releases you with a shove, and then raises his blaster. "Run, and I'll shoot you down like a dog!"

You briefly consider pointing out that far more human beings are shot annually than dogs. And rather than being the norm, most dogs are well-treated, as cruel treatment, including shootings, are illegal under every jurisdiction in the known universe apart from the planet Purros, which is populated by an intelligent feline race that is famous for yarn production and barbarous public dog torturing.

Instead, you just rub your neck and continue on your way. You are directed into the lift and the soldier presses the button for level X, the main engineering deck. As the lift descends, the soldier removes his helmet to clean off the spittle from inside the visor. He gives you a glare that warns you not to try anything.

To try something, turn to **27**

To remain passive, turn to **9**

312s

46

Keeping out of sight, you slowly make your way through the loading bay, creeping from crate to crate; crawling behind groups of barrels and boxes. You work your way around to the other side of the ship, seeing the robot dog's tail wagging slowly as it sits facing the other way.

With exaggerated care, you creep forward and come within 2 metres of the dog as you climb onto the access ramp. The robot does not react, and you walk silently into the ship.

Turn to **59**

177s

47

You stagger about until you find a wall screen and call up a map. Plotting your course, you set off, guiding lights in the floor leading you onwards. Eventually you arrive at a set of doors that whoosh open at your approach and you enter into a large round chamber with a large reclining chair set on a swivel base in the centre. A medical android stands nearby, its exoskeleton pale green like some kind of imitation surgeon.

“Welcome. Please state the nature of your injury, sensation, or anxiety,” it says in a soothing voice.

“Hungover. Fix it!” You collapse into the chair, which automatically reclines.

“Certainly, sir.” The robot walks over to a wall panel that opens at his approach. It extends an arm that ends in a wrist socket, and the small alcove in the wall dispenses a hand holding a syringe full of clear liquid. The union is formed and the android turns back to you. You look away as it mutters calming words before shoving a length of metal into your body. The injection done, you look back to see the android returning the hand to the alcove, which is promptly hidden behind the wall panel again.

You soon start to feel better (restore 1 STAMINA). You ask the android for some medical kits. It gives you a single kit containing 5 wound closure pads, 3 jars of salve for burns and irritations and 3 stimulant shots. You ask for another kit, but it refuses, saying it is only allowed to issue one kit per crewmember per week. Apparently there have been some cases of stimulant abuse.

The medical supplies can be used only as directed.

Feeling better, and better equipped, you make your way out of the medical bay and back towards the evacuation pod launching bay.

Turn to 31

334s

48

You search about. On the steps leading up to the second level you find an id card. It is yours! You shout in triumph. Never have you been so happy to see your own spotty face! You hurry back down the stairs and make for the entrance.

Turn to 23

174s

49

You press the button and the doors close. You fidget impatiently as the lift seems to crawl along, the lights indicating the current deck seeming to linger teasingly. Finally with a pleasant chime the doors open and you spring out. You pound the floor with your feet as you run at world-record-breaking pace despite the lack of time-keeping officials. Yes, this all looks familiar... but the further you go the more uncertain you become. No this is all wrong. You are on the wrong deck! You spin about and go back the way you came. Reaching the lift, you jump inside...

To try another level, turn to another reference 2 to 25. If that reference makes no sense, then you are have erred again and must return here to receive your time penalty.

135s

50

You speak the word, and the console before you lights up, while engines somewhere in the rear power up. The ship trembles and takes off. The heat is starting to grow unbearable, and you grip the arms of the chair tightly. The ship speeds through the bay and shoots out of the hanger door, sending you flying free at last into refreshingly cold space.

Turn to **60**

51

You search about, and behind the bar find scotch, whiskey, vodka, gin, rum, port, a dozen types of red and white wine, and beers from near and far. In the interests of your mission, you take a nip of courage. Still feeling a bit cowardly, you down some more courage, trying a different flavour. Not knowing what you are up against, you quickly prepare yourself by consuming bravery of all types from the entire variety of bottles.

Suddenly the prospect of plunging into the sun doesn't seem so bad! So this is what courage feels like. You set out from the bar to continue your mission.

Reduce your SKILL by 1 due to being tipsy.

If you are ready to leave the club, turn to **23**

Otherwise:

Where would you like to search?

To search under the tables, turn to **4**

To sniff about the Dance floor, turn to **25**

To seek within the Private Booths, turn to **37**

To examine the stairway leading to the second level, turn to **48**

To quest in the Chill-out Lounge, turn to **55**

204s

52

You shout your command code at it, then say: "Lower the internal temperature of the ship now! As cold as possible!"

"Yes captain," the computer replies. The next moment cold air begins to blow through a vent nearby. As seconds pass, it grows colder and colder, and you bask in icy relief for a moment. But you have won only a temporary reprieve, and hurry onwards.

The corridor leads you to a loading bay, rows of large crates lying in neat rows. Of greater interest to you is the small ship standing nearby. Of equal interest, although much less welcome is the robotic guard dog sitting in front of the boarding ramp. It has a large tube-like head that is clearly a rocket launcher.

If you have a blaster you can shoot the dog-bot by turning to **8**

If you want to try and sneak around behind it and climb aboard the ship, turn to **46**

143s

53

Your aim is poor and your blast goes awry. You keep firing, but the dog-bot fires back, its head engulfed in a cloud of smoke and flame as it fires a rocket at you. You duck back behind the barrels, a foolish and futile move as the rocket ignites the barrels of fuel and a great explosion sends you to a quick fiery death, sparing you the slow fiery death of falling into the sun.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

54

Leaving the observation lounge and the parent-bot, you hurry down the corridor. You are sweating profusely, but the sweat evaporates off your skin in moments. Although the ship is yet to pass into the corona of the sun, the heat is intense enough to start cooking you inside the ship like a loaf of bread in a baking tin.

As you hurry along, you glance at the air conditioning vents. Can't someone turn on the cooling? You see a computer panel ahead, and dash up to it.

"Computer!" you gasp. "Turn on the cooling!"

"Please input command code," the computer asks politely.

If you have a command code, double it and turn to the reference number thus created.

Otherwise, turn to **33**

20s

55

You search about, and between the cushions of a couch in the chill-out lounge you find a magical broadsword, 20 gold pieces, a winged helm, an invitation to compete in the Trial of Champions in Fang, a large diamond, and a golden ring.

When you use the sword, it will do 4 points of damage per hit and you may add 2 to your SKILL in combat.

If you are ready to leave the club, turn to **23**

Otherwise:

Where would you like to search?

To search under the tables, turn to **4**

To sniff about the Dance floor, turn to **25**

To seek within the Private Booths, turn to **37**

To examine the stairway leading to the second level, turn to **48**

To look about the Bar, turn to **51**

174s

56

Your shot is true and the dog-bot is thrown back by the hot impact of the blast, crashing into a sparking heap. Feeling like the coolest person in the universe, you hurry into the shuttle.

Turn to 59

17s

57

You continue on your way and finally the corridor ends at a pair of doors bearing the designation: "Bridge."

The doors open at your approach and you enter into the correctly labelled room. As you step inside, the first thing you notice is the bright light shining from the front of the room where the large viewscreen fills the wall. Light and heat from the image of the sun directly ahead blaze upon you, making it difficult to see. You stumble inside, until your hands hit upon a polished wooden rail.

Shading your eyes and squinting for good measure, you manage to see that the bridge is a multi-layered affair, with rows of tiered consoles below you extending down to the foot of the viewscreen. Where you stand is the highest tier, unoccupied except for a large comfortable chair, with a quaint old sailing ship's wheel before it.

You give the wheel a spin, hoping against hope that it is more than ornamental. The wheel spins easily, a testament to the loving care bestowed upon its ball-bearings in the form of regular greasing. However, apart from testifying to the aforementioned loving care, the wheel is non-functional.

Going over to the captain's chair, you sit down, feeling yourself settle into the soft clasp of its silken cushions. Your enjoyment of the chair does not prevent you from scorning the decadence of the former captain, and after a moment's indulgence, you get to the matter at hand.

"Computer," you say in your most commanding voice. "Change course!"

"Who is squeaking?" the computer asks politely.

"The captain! I am the captain now!" you announce.

"Yes, sir," the computer agrees without any resistance. "Please input your command code."

"Wa? I don't have one," you reveal, your voice trembling with the kind of uncertainty that has spawned countless mutinies ever since men went to sea in groups together.

"Navigational command requires command status," the computer tells you sympathetically.

"I am the last crewmember left on board, am I not?" you ask.

"Yes, sir," the computer agrees.

"That makes me the captain now, doesn't it?"

"Yes, captain."

"So why don't I have command status?" you want to know.

"You need to submit your CMN and apply for command status. If your application is successful, you will need to register and create a command code. Then you can login and take command."

"What's a CMN?" you ask, perplexed.

"Crew Member Number," the computer informs you. "It is the prominent number on your Crewmember Identification Card."

Now you are getting somewhere! You reach into your pocket for the card. Not in that pocket. You check the next likely pocket. Nothing. You check the remainder of your pockets with growing dread and dismay that reaches a peak, then sends a wave of fear crashing down upon you, wiping you out and dumping you upon the shore of frustration.

You know you had it with you last night. The card is used to make purchases from the funds in your on-board account. You had it at the club last night, purchasing the alcohol that was subsequently poured down your throat, resulting in the state of extreme charm that you are still recovering from. You must have lost it in the dance club.

"Be right back!" you shout, springing up from the chair and dashing towards the exit. The opulent corridor sweeps past as you run towards the lift, pound the button and hurl yourself into the small, vertically mobile room. You lift your extended finger to press the button, yet it pauses, trembling in anticipation of function.

What floor was the dance club on? There are 26 buttons, marked A to Z. You are always getting lost on this damn ship. You can't even remember the name of the dance club.

If you know what floor you were on, you can turn to the correct reference by converting the letter to a number using A=1, B=2, ... , Z=26. Otherwise, you will just have to guess. If the passage you turn to makes no sense, then turn instead to **49** right away.

264s

You push open the doors and find yourself at the bottom of a wide, carpeted stairway. The single flight leads you up onto the floor of a large

dome that sits on the top of the ship like a bubble. It is filled with deck chairs allowing passengers a spectacular 360-degree view of the surrounding space.

The view is somewhat ruined by the massive hot-burning star directly ahead, and you quickly turn your attention to the two arguing men. They are dressed as ships stewards, in short maroon jackets and black pants with little black hats bearing a maroon and gold band. They seem oblivious to the danger, so you hurry over to warn them.

"Gentlemen!" you say, interrupting them. "The ship is going to crash into *that!* We have to get out!"

The two stewards look at you impatiently, not even following the direction of your urgent point. "Yes, yes!" says one. "We know! That's why we have to get this right before we can go! Now stop bothering us!"

They get back to their argument, which seems to be about the correct positioning for the deckchairs in the observation dome. Astounded that they would bother with such a thing, you interrupt them again. "All these chairs will be burnt up when the ship falls into the sun! It doesn't matter what position they are in!"

The two of them look at you coldly. "Do we tell you how to do your job?" one asks you.

"No, but--"

"Then leave us to do ours!" thunders the other.

They turn away from you and start tugging at a deckchair, fighting over its position. Shaking your head, you leave them to their dispute and hurry back out into the main corridor.

Turn to 57

152s

59

You hurry through the shuttle and into the small cockpit. You slide into the pilot's chair. You see out the window that the hanger doors are already open; the vacuum of space held back by powerful force fields that will help propel your ship out into space away from the sun.

You look down at the large console and start pressing buttons, but nothing happens. How can you start up the ship?

Turn to 33

30s

60

From screens showing the rear view, you watch the great luxury cruiser plummet into the blazing star. Turning back to the front, you watch the stars ahead. Once you are far enough away from the sun, the computer will take the ship into hyperspace and speed you back to G15-275 within a day.

With a sigh you think fondly of the dreary little planetoid. You have had more than enough adventure in your life already. A quiet life on a backwater planetoid, that's what you need!

Your peace is disturbed by a warning tone, and a large vessel suddenly looms before you. A communications screen springs to life, and you see there the concerned face of a beautiful woman, with luscious red lips, large bright green eyes and waves of chestnut hair adorned with jade flowers. Her skin is also green, but she is none the less very easy on the eye.

"Ah, a human male!" she exclaims with obvious delight.

"Why, yes. Yes I am!" you say, pleased in turn.

"You must help us! My name is Bigones. I represent queen Hotbutt of the planet Teeheehee. We have been invaded by an army of spiders! Our race breeds asexually and is all female! Yet we have heard that human males can kill spiders! Will you come and help us?"

Her beautiful lips tremble, and tears spill from her eyes at the thought of the horrible spiders. "Um," you say. "How big are these spiders?"

"Some are reputed to be as much as 2 cm in size!"

"Are they poisonous?"

"No, but they are ugly and disgusting and creepy!"

A planet full of beautiful women needing someone to rescue them from an army of small, non-poisonous spiders? Hmm. You feel the need for adventure growing once more in your pants – I mean, in your heart.

THE END

But tune in next time to see what happens in:

Planet of the Spiders